

THE REPRESENTATION OF AINU CULTURE IN THE JAPANESE MUSEUM SYSTEM

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Abstract / Résumé

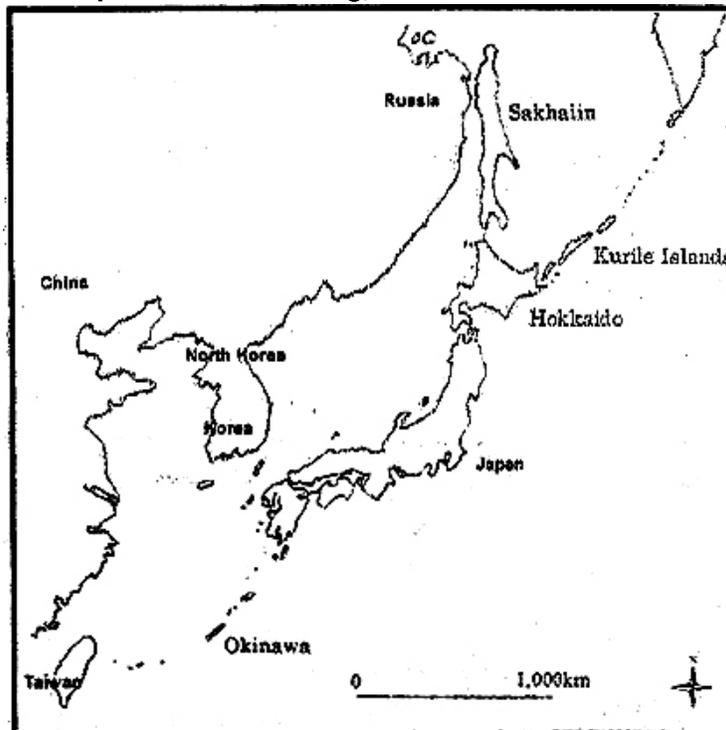
Ainu culture was once considered to be useless or represented as the relic of the past. In the 1990s, however, there were some events regarding Ainu cultural promotion and they increased opportunities for the wider society to become aware of the Ainu. Despite these events, there are conflicts over the way the Ainu are represented culturally. The lack of contemporary culture from permanent exhibitions is another problem. This article reviews Ainu cultural representation in the Japanese museum system and discusses what the conflicts are, why the lack of contemporary culture is a problem, and why this problem remains unsolved.

La culture des Aïnous a déjà été considérée inutile ou représentée comme une relique du passé. Toutefois, dans les années 1990, on a organisé des événements de promotion de la culture aïnoue qui ont accru les possibilités de sensibilisation de l'ensemble de la société aux Aïnous. Malgré ces événements, la représentation culturelle des Aïnous fait l'objet de conflits. Le manque de représentations culturelles contemporaines dans les expositions permanentes est également un problème. L'article traite de la représentation culturelle des Aïnous dans le système muséal japonais et présente les conflits en cours en expliquant pourquoi le manque de représentations culturelles contemporaines est un problème et pourquoi il n'est toujours pas résolu.

Introduction

The Ainu are an Aboriginal people of Japan, the majority of whom have lived in the northern island of Hokkaido, and in part, the Kurile Islands and southern Sakhalin (see Figure 1). The origin of the Ainu is still under investigation. However, it is considered that human first settled in Hokkaido more than 20,000 years ago and the characteristics of Ainu culture was gradually formed between the middle of the eighth century and the fourteenth century (regarding the origin of the Ainu and their culture, see Siddle 1996; Fitzhugh and Dubreuil 1999). According to the Survey of Living Condition of the Ainu produced by the Hokkaido local government, the 1999 estimated population of the Ainu was 23,767, 0.02% of the total population of Japan (Ainu Affairs Office 2001: 20). The actual Ainu population is, however, estimated to be more than that for several reasons. First, these statistics do not include Ainu who live outside Hokkaido since the Hokkaido local government does not conduct the survey outside Hokkaido. Second, these statistics represent the number of the Ainu who replied to the Survey of Living Condition of the

Figure 1
Japan and surrounding, the location of Hokkaido



Ainu. The Ainu who did not reply to the survey are therefore not included in these statistics. In addition, the Hokkaido Ainu Association has requested the Hokkaido local government not to send questionnaire forms to the Ainu who do not want to be known as Ainu for fear of discrimination.

Historically, the Ainu have experienced hardships and racism similar to what other Aboriginal peoples in the world experienced: long-term colonization by the Japanese, the Government's policy of assimilation, the relocation of community, the spread of disease, a decreasing of population, and discrimination. The Ainu have not been widely recognized in the international literature on Aboriginal studies until relatively recently. In English-speaking countries, however, specialists on East Asian studies have often discussed the issues of the Ainu. Some research results in English, especially the history of the Ainu, are now becoming available (e.g., Siddle 1996; 1997a; 1997b; 2002; 2003; Cheung 1996; 2000; 2003; 2004; 2005; Fitzhugh and Dubreuil 1999; Walker 2001; Irimoto and Yamada 2004; Howell 2005).

Like Canada's First Nations culture, Ainu culture has been represented as "savage," "uncivilized," and "exotic." For several decades after World War II, the Ainu were considered to be "extinct" or "assimilated." In the 1990s, however, there were some important events regarding Ainu cultural promotion. In the international context, the year 1993 was the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. In the domestic context, the establishment of the Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture (FRPAC) in July 1997 based on the Ainu Culture Promotion Act changed the way the Ainu are represented culturally and also increased opportunities for the wider society to become aware of the Ainu. The FRPAC has held traditional Ainu craft traveling exhibitions every year since its establishment and the planning committees have tried to represent Ainu culture from "new" and "unique" perspectives. Despite these events, there is a strong stereotype that Ainu culture, or more widely, Aboriginal culture should be "traditional." It is often considered that Aboriginal people do not have history and their culture is static and "the facts of ongoing relationships and involvements" with non-Aboriginal people have been denied (Wolf, 1982:18). In Canada, for example, First Nations culture is often represented as Canada's heritage and past. Mackey argues that the image of Native peoples has been created in "a national narrative in which the land and Native peoples have a central role" (Mackay, 2002:74). "[Native] peoples, who earlier disappeared from the development of the nation, re-appear to help create harmony with the land" (ibid:76). Native peoples are seen as equal with the land and nature. "[E]arlier narratives of nationalism often had

Native people representing Canada's heritage and past, and they even appear carved into the walls of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, Canada's capital" (ibid:77). In this regard, anything contemporary, or anything which lacks "Native flavour" and "nature" are not considered to be part of Native culture. In Japan, this perspective toward Aboriginal culture in part results in the fact that the permanent exhibition of most museums, not only historical museums but also even Ainu museums is lacking contemporary Ainu culture.

The lack of contemporary Ainu culture from the permanent exhibition is a major problem in the Japanese museum system since it often forms an inappropriate imagination among the Japanese public that the Ainu no longer exists in the contemporary Japanese society. Many curators are aware of this problem as I will detail in the following sections. Why then does this problem remain unsolved? In this paper, this issue is addressed through a historical overview of special exhibitions, review of permanent exhibitions, and interviews.

Japanese and Ainu names in this paper are following the Japanese convention; family name first, followed by given name. Unfamiliar Japanese and Ainu words, except place names, are italicized. The Roman spelling of Ainu words is following Kayano's Ainu language dictionary (Kayano 2002). The character C is pronounced as [ch]. For exhibition titles, I only mention English titles if the catalogue has one. If the catalogue does not have one, I mention Japanese titles and add my translation into English.

Methodology

Special exhibitions are good opportunities for the museum and curators to realize a "new" style of exhibition or adopt a "new" concept (Phillips, 2001:85). The review and evaluation of special exhibitions will be the base of better exhibitions. By incorporating the result of special exhibitions, permanent exhibitions can also be improved. The review of special exhibitions is therefore meaningful. In the Canadian context, many specialists and curators have discussed how Native art has been represented in museum system and reviewed past exhibitions. Pivotal exhibitions are repeatedly discussed in their works and the relations between exhibition concepts and the then social backgrounds are also explored. It is therefore not so difficult to historically overview the representation of First Nations culture in the Canadian museum system.

As far as I have investigated, however, there is no existing research on historical overview of Ainu cultural representation in the museum, or review of museum exhibitions on the Ainu, except some small introductions and reviews by curators on their own museum exhibition (e.g.,

Deriha, 2001). Exhibition catalogues are now published for many special exhibitions and most of them explain the concept of the exhibition or how exhibited artifacts were collected and how those artefacts are valuable. They also introduce the general history of the Ainu. Few of them, however, review the concept of past exhibitions and discuss what is improved or added in the new exhibition. The lack of the review of past exhibitions has often resulted in the repetition of similar exhibitions in different locations or the lack of communication among museums or curators. Thus, there is a need to document and consider how Ainu culture has been represented in the Japanese museum system since the nineteenth century, and to explore how the way of cultural representation has changed and what remains unsolved over the representation of Ainu culture.

To review, first, I picked all special exhibitions which seem to relate to Ainu culture. I collected as many exhibition catalogues as possible by visiting used book stores and museums which have Ainu collections. As I will mention later, many museums located outside Hokkaido have Ainu collection, since Ainu researchers/collectors or their descendants often donated the artifacts to the nearest major museum. I checked out those museum websites, and occasionally visited such museums since some websites do not list past exhibitions or catalogue publications. Publication lists produced by used book store and curators (e.g., Sasaki and Sasakura, 1994; 1995; 1996; Sasakura, 1997; 1998) and the exhibition opening information in the journal *Hakubutsukan Kenkyu* (*Museum Studies*) were also helpful. I have found nearly 180 such exhibitions between 1940 and 2005.

Table 1
The Number of Exhibitions on the Ainu by Years and Regions

Year	Eastern Japan				Western Japan				Total
	Hokkaido	Tohoku	Kanto	Chubu	Kinki	Chugoku	Shikoku	Kyushu	
2000-2005	38	9	10	4	8	1	2	1	73
1995-1999	27	3	4	1	5	3		2	45
1990-1994	25	5	3	2	4				39
1980s	11		1	1	2				15
1970s	1		2						3
1960s			1		2				3
1940s			1						1
Total	102	17	22	8	21	4	2	3	179

Table 2
The Museums That Have Permanent Exhibition on the Ainu

Name	Location	Visited Date
Hokkaido		
Asahikawa City Museum	Asahikawa	Jul-05
Kawamura Kaneto Ainu Memorial Museum	Asahikawa	Jul-05
Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum	Biratori	Aug-04
Historical Museum of Saru River	Biratori	Aug-04
Kayano Shigeru Ainu Culture Museum	Biratori	Aug-04
Kushiro City Museum	Kushiro	Aug-04
Obihiro Centennial City Museum	Obihiro	Aug-04
Historical Museum of Hokkaido	Sapporo	Aug-04
Yanaga Hokkaido Museum	Sapporo	Jun-05
Sapporo Ainu Culture Promotion Center	Sapporo	Sep-04
Ainu Museum	Shiraoi	Sep-04
Outside Hokkaido		
National Museum of Ethnology	Osaka	Jul-05
Serizawa Keisuke Art & Craft Museum	Sendai	Sep-04
Tohoku History Museum	Sendai	Sep-04
Shizuoka City Serizawa Keisuke Art Museum	Shizuoka	Jul-05
Tenri University Sankokan Museum	Tenri	Jul-05
Tokyo National Museum	Tokyo	Aug-04
Aizu Museum, Waseda University	Tokyo	Jul-05

Next, I made a chronological list of all the 180 exhibitions, which shows title, opening period and site, and exhibition concept. I also made another list which shows the number of exhibitions held by the year and regional division (Table 1). I count traveling exhibitions held in two or more different sites as separate exhibitions since the site is important in the Japanese context. In addition, I interviewed four curators, the staff member of the FRPAC, and a craft person. Five of the six interview participants, except the craft person, have a long experience of an Ainu museum curator and research. They have also joined planning committees of the special exhibitions on the Ainu. I showed them the chronological list I made and asked if I was missing any pivotal exhibitions on the Ainu. I am sure that I have picked almost all exhibitions on the Ainu

held in Japanese museums since they added quite a few. Then I asked which exhibitions interested, what the achievements, problems, and lessons of the exhibitions are and what kind of exhibitions needs to be organized for the future. The interviews were open-ended and conducted in the summer 2004, when I was doing my main fieldwork for dissertation. The transcripts were checked by the participant. As occasion demands, I conducted the second interview in the summer 2005. To review permanent exhibitions, I visited as many museums that have Ainu collections as possible in 2004 and 2005 (see Table 2).

Ainu Exhibitions Overview

Table 1 shows the number of exhibitions by years and regions (regarding regional divisions and place names of Japan mentioned in this article, see Figures 2 and 3). I include the number of exhibitions whose main topic is not the Ainu but ones of which the Ainu are considered to be a major part. Examples are: exhibitions on the biography of Ainu researchers/collectors such as the novelist Sarashina Genzo, the explorer Matsuura Takeshiro, or the merchant Takadaya Kahei; exhibitions on culture of ethnic groups in the Northern Pacific region, such as marine resource, fur trade, or earthenware; and exhibitions on *Jomon* and *Satsumon* cultures in Hokkaido, which are considered to be the origin of Ainu culture (regarding *Jomon* and *Satsumon* cultures in Hokkaido, see Fitzhugh and Dubreuil 1999).

As Table 1 shows, approximately 55% of the exhibitions (102 out of 179) were held in Hokkaido. Since 1990, half of them (54 out of 102) were held in the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum, Biratori, (nine exhibitions), the Ainu Museum, Shiraoui, (eight exhibitions), the Hokkaido Museum of Northern Peoples, Abashiri, (13 exhibitions), or the Historical Museum of Hokkaido, Sapporo, (24 exhibitions). Meanwhile, quite a few have been held in western Japan, especially Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu (only nine exhibitions). It can be therefore said that people in Western Japan have had few opportunities to experience Ainu culture.

Table 1 also shows that only 22 exhibitions were held before the 1990s. This is partly because few museums were actively holding special exhibitions before the 1990s. Even in Hokkaido, it was not until the 1980s that major museums started to hold special exhibitions on the Ainu. The number of special exhibitions on the Ainu gradually increased after the Hokkaido Museum of Northern Peoples opened in 1991 and the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum reopened in 1992.

Figure 2
Cities and regional divisions of Japan



Figure 3
Hokkaido and some place names



The Exhibits on the Ainu in the Nineteenth Century and the Early Twentieth Century

The concept and institution of the museum were imported to Japan in the nineteenth century, though Japan's history of collection and exhibition goes back to the eighth century. The first museum in Japan was the Tokyo National Museum, whose origin is considered to be a *Hakurankai* (Exposition) held in Yushima, Tokyo, in 1872. Objects of the 1872 Exposition included a few craft works of Ainu and Uilta, another ethnic group who lived in Sakhalin, and they were also exhibited in the *Weltausstellung 1873 Wien* (Vienna World Exposition 1873). Since the objects attained a high reputation for their quality in Vienna, the Japanese government became eager to establish a universal survey museum to show national products. In 1882, as the successor to Japan's first museum in Yushima, a new museum was established in the present location, Ueno, Tokyo (Yoshida, 1999:74-86). In this new museum, Ainu objects were stored in a room of *Emishi Fuzoku* (Ainu folklore), as one of the ethnographic collections from around the world. As of 1977, the Tokyo National Museum had about 1,000 Ainu objects. One hundred seventy-seven of them were collected for the *Weltausstellung 1873 Wien* and 618 were the donation from Tokugawa Yorisada in 1927 (ibid:92-95).

During this period, Japanese researchers were generally not interested in Ainu culture and thought that Ainu artifacts were not worth preserving or exhibiting (Kotani, 2004:14-15). Meanwhile, some Europeans, including scholars, travelers and employees of the Japanese government, were attracted with Ainu culture. For example, the American geologist Benjamin Lyman conducted a geological survey in Hokkaido and "took comprehensive physical measurements of Ainu labourers on his team" (Siddle, 1996:78). The botanist Louis Boehmer, the seismologist John Milen, the zoologist Edward Morse, and the traveler Isabella Bird are other examples of those who were attracted with Ainu culture in this period. The British Missionary John Batchelor translated the Bible into the Ainu language (ibid). Josef Kreiner discusses the reasons why European people were interested in Ainu culture. According to him, in the nineteenth century Europe, "peaceful" hunting and gathering peoples were respected since there were a number of conflicts over political power and economic development (Kreiner, 1993, quoted in Kotani, 2004:11-12). In addition, in this period, human beings were categorized into three groups, namely, the Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid based on the human evolution theory and morphology. The Ainu were considered to belong to the Caucasoid and share the ancestor with the Germanic. This Ainu-Germanic theory is now denied. But in the late nineteenth century, the European who came to Japan felt a familiarity with

the Ainu (ibid). They collected Ainu artifacts as well as Japanese artifacts and brought them back to their home country. Such artifacts formed the collections of European museums. Table 3 shows the major collections of Ainu artifacts in European and North American museums. At this period, no Japanese institutions were eager to collect Ainu objects.

In the early twentieth century, scholars were more interested in the Ainu as a living people. They were eager to verify “scientifically” how the Ainu and other people in Japan’s colonies were “uncivilized” to justify colonization by the “civilized Japanese.” *Gakujutsu Jinruikan* (the Academic Anthropology House) at the fifth *Naikoku Hakurankai* (Domestic Exposition) in Osaka, 1903, is an example of a typical colonial perspective toward “uncivilized” people. The concept of *Gakujutsu Jinruikan* was adopted from the Japanese experience of the World Expositions and the organizers planned to exhibit living “Others” in Japan, such as Ainu, Koreans, Ryukyu (people of Okinawa, see Figure 1), Chinese, etc. The organizers had to give up the exhibition of living people because of resistance on the part of those people, except the Ainu. A couple of Ainu were forcibly taken from Hokkaido and exhibited with a restored Ainu village at *Gakujutsu Jinruikan* (Yoshimi, 1992:214).

The Ainu were also “invited” to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904 in St. Louis where four Ainu competed in the “Olympics of ‘savage’ people” to demonstrate Aboriginal physical prowess along with North American Aborigines. At the Exposition, nine Ainu, including the four who participated in the Olympics, were “exhibited” with 240 objects and two houses purchased by the organizational committee (Uemura, 2001:28-34).

The exhibition on the Ainu in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflected the perspective that the Ainu were an “inferior race.”

They Have “Beauty” but are Still “Uncivilized”: The 1940s, 1960s and 1970s

The first special exhibition on the Ainu held in a Japanese museum is the *Ainu Mingeiin Dai Tenkan* (*Overview of Ainu Folk Crafts*), Japan Folk Crafts Museum, Tokyo, in 1941. The Japan Folk Crafts Museum was established by a folk craft collector, Yanagi Muneyoshi. This exhibition displayed “Ainu folk crafts” collected by Yanagi, and another collector, Sugiyama Sueo from an “artistic” perspective. In the first half of the twentieth century, Ainu artifacts were considered to be the relics of the archaeological era, and useless things. In this social background, Yanagi, Sugiyama and some other Ainu researchers such as Kindaichi Kyosuke found “beauty” in Ainu folk crafts. Kindaichi and Sugiyama, who published a series of books *Ainu Geijutsu* (Ainu Art) over three years

Table 3
The Major Collections of Ainu Artifacts of European and North American Museums and the Approximate Number of Items

Canada	
Royal Ontario Museum	75
USA	
Brooklyn Museum	950
American Museum of Natural History	450
Matson Museum of Anthropology, Penn State University	300
National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian	214
Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago	215
Milwaukee Public Museum	220
Russia	
Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Science	1400
Russian Ethnography Museum, Saint Petersburg	2450
Germany	
Museum of Ethnology, Hamburg	770
Museum of Ethnology, Berlin	600
Museum of Ethnology, Leipzig	730
Austria	
Museum of Ethnology, Vienna	200
Sweden	
Ethnology Museum, Stockholm	420
Netherlands	
National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden	157
UK	
Museum of London	220
Italy	
Anthropology and Ethnology Museum, Firenze	500
Hungary	
Museum of Ethnology, Budapest	160

from 1941 to 1943, state:

Although the Ainu has a very long oral literature called *yukar*, their art and craft clearly shows the superiority of this ethnicity, not the inferiority as people think.... We shall name them Ainu art, and publish three volumes on [their arts]; ornament, wooden craft, and metalworking. Ainu craft and art is not produced for someone or something.... Artists can produce a masterpiece by immersing themselves into their own world and pursuing their own curiousness just like children.... Such pursuit of beauty enables to create masterpieces, which have now been lost in the main islands of Japan. (Kindaichi and Sugiyama, 1993:n.p. author's translation)

They thought that “beauty” was still preserved in Ainu society, and tried to spread the “beauty” of Ainu crafts by the exhibition and publication.

It was not until 1960 that the second exhibition, *Ainu no Mingeiin* (*Ainu Folkcrafts*), was held in the Tenri University Sankokan Museum, Tenri. It is notable how this museum collected Ainu artifacts. The City of Tenri is a religious city where the *Tenri-kyo* organization is located, and many citizens are believers in *Tenri-kyo*. The Tenri University Sankokan Museum was planned by the second leader of *Tenri-kyo* and established in 1930. This leader thought that it was inevitable to understand peoples' way of life to propagate the religion and collect various artifacts. The believers went around East, Southeast, and South Asia, and Mexico and Guatemala, to propagate the religion and collected artifacts. Ainu artifacts were collected in this process. The museum collection is now one of the major Ainu collections among Japanese museums, and the museum displays Ainu artifacts as a permanent exhibition.

Ainu Bunka-ten (*Ainu culture exhibition*) in 1963 was not a long-term exhibition, but this exhibition is also notable. The exhibition was held in two department stores in Tokyo and Osaka along with *Hokkaido Bussanten* (the exhibition and sale of Hokkaido products). The exhibition catalogue shows that this exhibition was the comprehensive introduction of Ainu culture to Japanese society based on anthropological research results. For example, the editors and planning committee members were the then authoritative researchers on the Ainu, such as Kodama Sakuzaemon, Takakura Shin'ichiro, Kubodera Itsuhiko, Sarashina Genzo, and Kono Hiromichi. They also co-published a book of the Ainu, *Ainu Minzokushi* (*Ainu Ethnography*) in 1969 (Ainu Bunka Hozon Taisaku Kyogikai, 1969). The committee and the catalogue depicted Ainu as “an exotic uncivilized people” living in a traditional lifestyle. *Ainu Minzokushi* resulted in a lawsuit over Ainu portrait rights in the 1980s because of the

use of a photograph of an Ainu woman without her permission. The book itself was also exposed with a critique for its argument that the Ainu would be extinct in the near future.

The Historical Museum of Hokkaido (hereafter the HMH) opened in 1971. Since the history of Hokkaido cannot ignore the existence of the Ainu, the HMH exhibited Ainu culture as a permanent collection. Meanwhile the HMH held the first special exhibition on the Ainu, *Ethnological Exhibition of the Ainu etc.* in 1972. This exhibition is the first special exhibition on the Ainu held in Hokkaido. The exhibition itself was a general introduction of Ainu culture, and the catalogue stated that it aimed to investigate the origin and history of the Ainu by comparing them with other ethnic groups. The exhibit included Japanese and Ainu skulls borrowed from Sapporo Medical University.

Ainu Bunka ten (Ainu Culture Exhibition) held in the Saitama Prefectural Museum in 1972 also had a comparative perspective. This exhibition was one of a series which aimed to introduce Japanese cultures of various regions to the local residents. In the catalogue, the director of the Museum states:

We have to learn culture of other regions to understand the history and art of Saitama accurately and clearly.... [The series of these exhibitions] will clarify how cultural characteristics were produced. How do [other regions' cultures] connect to the culture of Saitama? We shall introduce [the culture of] Hokkaido to people in Saitama. (Yoshida, 1972:n.p., author's translation)

The reason why Ainu culture was introduced as the culture of Hokkaido is because the museum had some Ainu artifacts donated by a collector Kiyono Kenji, and an authoritative Ainu researcher, Ohtsuka Kazuyoshi, was a curator there. The exhibition itself was a general introduction of Ainu culture.

One landmark event in the 1970s was the opening in 1977 of the National Museum of Ethnology at the site of the 1970 Osaka World Exposition at Suita, Osaka. The Museum was the first one in Japan which exhibited ethnic cultures from around the world from a comparative perspective stressing equality of cultural values. The exhibition tried to convey the message that "it is inappropriate to distinguish ethnic cultures as developed or underdeveloped, or as civilized or primitive" (Shimizu, 1997:122). The exhibition emphasized ethnic traditions before Westernization and/or modernization and also displayed past cultures of China, Middle East, Europe, and Japan to avoid "hegemonic objectification of the Other" (ibid).

The permanent exhibition on the Ainu at the National Museum of

Ethnology opened in 1979 under the fear of terrorist attack by activists. The exhibition was the results of a collaborative work between the Museum and the Ainu. Since the Museum did not have many Ainu artifacts, most objects were newly produced by a famous Ainu, Kayano Shigeru, and other Ainu from Nibutani. They constructed a *ci-set* (traditional Ainu house), clothing and mats. In the process of fabrication, artifacts were celebrated through Ainu rituals (Shimizu, 1997:124). At that time, the law did not recognize the Ainu as an ethnic group; the national government saw Ainu culture as part of local Japanese traditions. However, the Museum showed Ainu culture as a distinct ethnic culture and gave the Ainu the status of an ethnic minority in Japan. The exhibition on the Ainu was therefore separated from that of the Japanese (Ohtsuka, 1997:109). The collaboration of the Museum with the Ainu, the recognition of Ainu culture as a distinct ethnic culture, and the giving of equal status made a significant change of the direction of exhibition on the Ainu.

As Deriha Koji, the curator of the HMH states, however, in the 1960s and 1970s, the exhibition of Ainu culture was considered to be discrimination against the Ainu because the Ainu themselves tried to hide the fact that they had Ainu ancestry for fear of discrimination. The exhibition of Ainu culture forced them to be aware of their Ainu ethnicity, and Ainu activists often objected to plans of Ainu exhibition. Most Ainu people were not interested in museum activities and cultural promotion, except a few such as Kayano, who was eagerly collecting Ainu artifacts then (Personal communication with Deriha, 2004). Anthropological research was also targeted by Ainu activists since most researchers shared the view that the Ainu and their culture had already become extinct, and artifacts were never valuable other than as samples for “scientific” research. The joint annual meeting of the Japanese physical anthropological and ethnological societies held at Sapporo Medical University in 1972 was intervened by the Ainu and some Japanese activists who sympathized with the Ainu. Activists asked the panelists if they would “support the Ainu struggle for liberation [or play] the role of completing the Japanese policy of genocide. The panelists [completely ignored them] and continued with their own programs” (Shimizu, 1997:123).

During this time, quite a few special exhibitions on the Ainu were held and each exhibition was held singularly. Exhibitions were planned and organized by researchers based on anthropological research results. The general public had few opportunities to see Ainu culture other than at tourist sites in Hokkaido. Some exhibitions like *Ainu Bunka-ten* in 1963 had a perspective that researchers should record and preserve Ainu culture and artifacts otherwise they would be permanently lost because the Ainu were not capable of the task. The statement of the re-

searcher Sarashina Genzo in the Ainu portrait rights lawsuit reflects this thinking, “The reason the Ainu get anthropologists to study them is because they do not have the ability to investigate themselves” (Chikappu, 1991:207).

Any Culture is Equal: The 1980s

The 1980s was significant in that the Ainu experienced international cultural exchange and became aware of cultural equality; however, the Japanese public did not share this view. Some curators started to think that Ainu culture should be presented more “accurately.” To disseminate more information about the Ainu, the HMH started to hold exhibitions on the Ainu on a regular basis as school teachers and students often asked whether the Ainu still lived in a “traditional” lifestyle (Personal communication with Deriha, 2004).

Meanwhile, the Ainu Museum, Shiraoi, which was originally a tourist site and established in 1976 as a social education facility to research Ainu culture, opened a museum in 1984 and it became more active to introduce Ainu culture to tourists. Their activities included the organization of special exhibitions. In the 1980s, seven of ten Ainu special exhibitions were held in these two museums. Exhibition topics became specialized, such as costume and ornaments, wood carving, hunting material, and local history of the Ainu and their relations with other regions. Since the Ainu Museum had Ainu staff members, it is assumed that Ainu perspectives became reflected in exhibitions to some extent during this period.

Outside Hokkaido the *Ainu no Fukushoku (Ainu Ornaments; Tenri University Sankokan Museum)* was held in 1983. The Riccar Art Museum in Tokyo held the *Exhibition of Customs of Ezo* in 1980. This notable exhibition displayed paintings of Ainu customs by Japanese painters during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The organizer states:

There have never been comprehensive exhibitions on paintings and woodcuts of *Emishi* due to their short history and rareness, and the lack of artistic element. As the one of persons concerned, I am really pleased that we can hold *Exhibition of Customs of Ezo*, which is the first exhibition on them in Japan. (Yanaga, 1980:n.p. author’s translation)

The Riccar Art Museum’s exhibition symbolized the view of major Japanese art museums toward Ainu culture. Since the 1980s, only paintings of Ainu customs by Japanese painters have been accepted as exhibits in major Japanese art museums. A few exceptions are art works by Sunazawa Bikky, and *The Seasons and Life of the Ainu: Tokachi Ainu and the Painter Byozan Hirasawa* (Hokkaido Obihiro Museum of Art, 1999)

which exhibited some artifacts to provide comparative perspectives. Dubreuil (1999) claims that the reason why art museums do not accept Ainu craft works in their exhibitions is because Ainu culture is looked down upon. According to Dubreuil, "Japanese art historians and contemporary art specialists continue to classify all Ainu art in the ethnic or folk art genre. In part this is a result of Japanese colonial policies and social attitudes, which were marked by disrespect for all things Ainu, including their culture, literature, and art." As Dubreuil (1999:335) states, "centuries of discrimination do not disappear overnight". Ainu artifacts have never been exhibited in such art museums, and even the perspective of beauty on Ainu folk crafts, which was seen in *Ainu mingei hin dai tenkan* in 1941, is no longer seen in art museums. Art museums alone should not be criticized for the exclusion of Ainu culture from their exhibits, however, because even Ainu museums do not exhibit contemporary Ainu craft works except for the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum, which displays Ainu craft works by Nibutani crafts people as permanent exhibition. Since Japanese art museums have mainly exhibited paintings, rather than carving or craft works, the complete lack of paintings by the Ainu, either historical or contemporary, would also be a reason why Japanese art museums do not exhibit Ainu craft works.

Ainu Collections Coming from Europe, and the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, 1993: We Represent us by ourselves: The 1990s (1)

The first half of the 1990s was the turning period of museum exhibition on the Ainu in that the Ainu themselves became eager to represent their own culture, and that the Japanese government started to support cultural promotion and representation of the Ainu. The International Year of the World's Indigenous People in 1993 significantly contributed to the increase of Japanese public interest.

In this period, the number of exhibitions drastically increased. In Hokkaido, the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum and the Hokkaido Museum of Northern Peoples (re)opened and started to hold exhibitions on the Ainu on a regular basis. Outside Hokkaido, museums which did not have Ainu collections started to hold special exhibitions on the Ainu by borrowing collection from other museums, especially from the Ainu Museum, Shiraoi, and the Hakodate City Museum. Such examples are *Hoppou Bunka no Katachi: Ainu Bunka ten (The shape of northern culture: Ainu culture)*, Akita Prefectural Museum, and *Kita no Bunka: Ainu no Kurashi to Inori (Northern culture: Life and belief of the Ainu)*, Tono Municipal Museum, Iwate, both in 1994.

The donations of Ainu collections or joint project research on the Ainu also enabled establishment of new museums or mounting of special exhibitions on the Ainu. Such examples are Shizuoka City Serizawa Keisuke Art Museum, Serizawa Keisuke Art & Craft Museum, Sendai. Serizawa Keisuke is a dyeing artist, and also a student of Yanagi Muneyoshi. Like Yanagi, Serizawa thought that beauty can be found in artifacts. He donated his art works and collection to the City of Shizuoka where he is from. The Shizuoka City Serizawa Keisuke Art Museum opened in 1981 (Shizuoka City Serizawa Keisuke Art Museum, 2005). Meanwhile, his son had an opportunity to see the office members of Tohoku Fukushi University, Sendai and heard that they were planning to open an art museum on campus. He donated part of Serizawa's art works and collections, and the Serizawa Keisuke Art & Craft Museum opened in 1989 (Serizawa, 2005). They have held special exhibitions on the Ainu since the open. The Osaka Pref. Chikatsu Asuka Museum also accepted Kiyono Kenji collection. Such exhibitions increased the opportunity to see Ainu culture outside Hokkaido. Meanwhile, they were not more than the general introduction of Ainu culture.

In 1993, at least five special exhibitions on the Ainu were held to honour the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. Besides such exhibitions, there were some notable exhibitions in 1993 and 1994. An example is *Ainu Moshiri: Minzoku Mon'you kara Mita Ainu no Sekai (Ainu Mosir: Ainu World viewing from motifs)*, National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka. Some Ainu participated in the planning committee under the direction of the national government; while, the foreword of the catalogue was published in Ainu language, a first for major museums (Personal communication with Deriha, 2004).

Ainu no Kogei (Ainu Crafts), Tokyo National Museum, was sponsored by the Tokyo National Museum and the Agency for Cultural Affairs, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. The exhibition displayed Ainu artifacts borrowed from two museums in Germany and was the product of the investigation on the Ainu collection owned by European and North American museums by Kotani Yoshinobu and his colleagues. In the early 1980s, specialists on the Ainu, especially Ainu material culture, began recognizing the value of Ainu artifacts from the nineteenth century owned by European and North American museums since Japanese museums collected little from the period (Kotani, 2004). These collections also have related data (e.g., when and where collected). Sasaki Toshikazu, one of Kotani's colleagues, recently stated:

When I saw [European] collections for the first time, I was really shocked. I recognized I had not known anything about Ainu [material] culture. I was forced to reconsider what

Ainu culture is all about. (Sasaki, 2005, author's translation)

Ainu no Kogei was the first exhibition which borrowed artifacts from European museums. Other exhibitions on collections of European museums are as follows: *Museum of Ethnography, Budapest: Barathosi Balogh Collection*, HMH and Obihiro Centennial City Museum, 1997; *Tekekarape, On'na no waza: Doitsu Korekushon kara* (Tek kar-pa, Women's technique, from Germany Collections), Ainu Museum, Shiraoi, 1999; *A Scottish Physician's View: Craft and Spirit of the Ainu from N.G. Munro Collection*, HMH and Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Cultural History, 2002; and *The Exhibition of Ainu collection of Russian Ethnography Museum*, HMH and Kawasaki City Museum, 2005. I had an opportunity to see the exhibition of the Russian collection which was extensive (e.g., children's clothing, toys).

Another notable exhibition in 1993 was *Gendai ni Ikiru Ainu Bunka* (*Ainu Culture Living in the Present*), HMH. It exhibited contemporary Ainu craftworks produced by Ainu, and the Ainu names for the works and their producer's names were displayed. This exhibition aimed to convey the continuance of Ainu culture. By exhibiting past craft works beside contemporary ones, the transmission of craft skills was shown (Personal communication with Deriha, 2004).

Ainu Moshiri: Minzoku Mon'you kara Mita Ainu no Sekai, National Museum of Ethnology impressed Nomura Giichi, then Secretary General of the Hokkaido Ainu Association, and he became eager to hold such a exhibition also in Hokkaido (Personal communication with Deriha, 2004). Based on *Ainu Moshiri*, in 1993, the HMH and the Hokkaido Ainu Association co-organized *Pirika-noka: Ainu Mon'yo kara Mita Minzoku no Kokoro* (*Pirika-noka: Ethnic Spirit Viewing from Ainu Motifs*). The chairperson of the committee was an Ainu activist and craftsperson, Akibe Tokuhei, and he became the first Ainu chairperson of an exhibition committee. The exhibit explanation was in both Japanese and Ainu language to show that Ainu language is also usable to communicate in contemporary Japanese society, and that Ainu have a different language (Personal communication with Deriha, 2004).

In the 1990s, historians also expanded their scope to the Japan "North," and they started eagerly to research the history of the medieval and modern era (between the thirteenth and nineteenth century) of northern Japan. Archaeologists also started to investigate the connection between Ainu culture and Japanese *Jomon* culture (20,000BC-2,000AD). There are some exhibitions which present these research results.

The Establishment of the FRPAC and Annual Ainu Craft Travelling Exhibition, “New” Trial or “Stereotypical” Anthropological Taxonomy?: The 1990s (2) and the 2000s

The establishment of the Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture (hereafter the FRPAC) in July 1997, based on the Ainu Culture Promotion Act, is highly significant with respect to cultural representation of the Ainu. The FRPAC started an annual Ainu craft traveling exhibition (*kogei ten*). The planning committees have tried to represent Ainu culture from “new,” “unique” perspectives, and the FRPAC has had a policy to send the exhibition outside Hokkaido. This policy resulted in exhibitions on the Ainu held in Chubu (Nagoya City Museum in 2000), Chugoku (Hiroshima-PREF, History & Folklore Museum in 2000), and Shikoku (Tokushima Prefectural Museum in 2003), where few or no exhibitions on the Ainu had been held. In 2006, the traveling exhibition was sent to Kyushu for the first time (Kitakyushu Municipal Museum of Art). The traveling exhibition aims to spread Ainu history and culture through craft exhibitions. Each exhibition is planned by the organizational committee, and generally travels to one museum in Hokkaido, and one or two museums outside Hokkaido. An exhibition on the collections of museums overseas is held once every three years (Personal communication with Akino Shigeki, the staff person of the FRPAC, 2004).

One of the “new” trials is *A Scottish Physician’s View: Craft and Spirit of the Ainu from N.G. Munro Collection*, 2002. As a member of the planning committee, Deriha created the concept of “the understanding of a different culture” for the exhibition. To show how Munro saw Ainu culture, the planning committee members and seven Ainu craftspeople who sympathized with the concept went to Scotland and tried to understand Munro’s cultural background and his view toward Ainu culture. The exhibit was divided into two sections. The first section displayed Munro’s collection of the early period and the second section displayed the ones of the late period. These two sections tried to show the change of Munro’s preference for Ainu artifacts and his view toward Ainu culture. Meanwhile, the seven Ainu craftspeople saw Munro’s collection in Scotland from “craftspeople’s perspective,” and their views were also incorporated into the exhibition. The interviewer was also an Ainu curator (Personal communication with Deriha, 2004).

Message from the Ainu: Craft and Spirit, Tokushima Prefectural Museum, Asahikawa City Museum, and National Museum of Ethnology, in 2003 and 2004, was the first special exhibition whose primary purpose was to allow contemporary Ainu craftspeople to display their own

craft works in museums. The concept underlying the exhibition was that any craft works produced by the Ainu should be accepted as being part of Ainu culture. Although the main organizer of this exhibition was the FRPAC, “Many ordinary Ainu also made recommendations regarding objects to be exhibited” (Yoshida, 2003:154). Yoshida also states:

Though four curators, including myself, form the sites of this traveling exhibition, i.e. the Tokushima Prefectural Museum and the National Museum of Ethnology, joined the planning committee as representatives of the host museums, our roles went no further than planning spatial arrangement for the exhibits while taking account of how visitors accept exhibits at each venue. After lengthy discussion, the concept of the exhibition became firm; it should focus on “Ainu history directly leading up to the present” and bring “people” rather than objects to the fore. It was the planners’ intention to create an exhibition that, instead of concentrating on timeless traditions, actually described Ainu people as those living in the present while continuing to inherit their ancestors’ cultural traditions. Both the title “Message from the Ainu – Craft and Spirit” and the formation of the zones entitled “Contemporary forms,” “Heritage” and “Explorations” were directly derived from the above-mentioned intention. The event, when it comes to full fruition, will be the nation’s first traveling exhibition which Ainu people represent Ainu culture on their own. (ibid: 154)

Kaizawa Toru, an Ainu craftsman in Nibutani, who went to Scotland and saw Munro’s collection, positively evaluates *A Scottish Physician’s View*. Since he had thought that researchers and craftspeople did not share the same perspective toward Ainu artifacts, and he wanted to have an opportunity to see the collections of foreign museums, he applied to go to Scotland when the FRPAC invited a couple of Ainu craftspeople. He states:

In Scotland, I was really impressed with Munro’s collection. Craft works were beautiful, and the skills to carve detailed patterns with the then limited tools were excellent. The curator allowed us to touch them, and I could sketch and photograph them. Such beautiful craft works encouraged me to improve my craft skills much more. I have been carving copies of Munro’s collection based on the sketches and photographs.... I want to tell a lot of people that Munro stayed in Nibutani and helped the local residents. *A Scottish Physician’s View* provided Ainu craftspeople an oppor-

tunity to see collections of foreign museums. That exhibition was really good. (Personal communication with Kaizawa, 2005, author's translation)

Kaizawa also joined the planning committee of *Message from the Ainu*, and displayed his craft works in the exhibition. He states that the concept was good and Ainu craftspeople took a major role to organize the exhibition. Contemporary Ainu craftspeople also got an opportunity to appeal their works. "Without this exhibition, museum exhibits of Ainu culture must have been only 'traditional old' things" (ibid).

Deriha also positively evaluates *Message from the Ainu*.

It can be considered that *Message from the Ainu* is an epoch-making event in that museum and Aboriginal people co-worked to make an exhibition. I was impressed with the pictures of contemporary Ainu's daily activities, such as office work and hobbies, which cannot be seen in traditional Ainu lifestyle. I would like to appreciate that the FRPAC decided to hold such an exhibition. (Personal communication with Deriha, 2004, author's translation)

Nonetheless Akino, the staff member of the FRPAC, is a little critical of these new styles of exhibition. Although he agrees that he enjoyed the concept and exhibition itself of *A Scottish Physician's View*, he thinks that the craft works should have been displayed not by Munro's view but by an anthropological taxonomy (Personal communication with Akino, 2004; 2005). The primary purpose of the Ainu craft traveling exhibition as an FRPAC project is to spread Ainu culture and history through exhibits. Even "stereotypical" anthropological taxonomy would be useful to get people who do not know well who the Ainu people are to know how they lived. Akino thinks that "beautiful" craft works should be displayed by an anthropological taxonomy, rather than trying to convey "difficult" stories or concepts by exhibits. He emphasizes the role of the FRPAC to tell people who the Ainu are. Telling it to people is the starting point, especially outside Hokkaido.

This conflict continued with *The Exhibition of Ainu Collection of Russian Ethnography Museum*, 2005. This exhibition divided craft works into three sections: male works, female works, and works for children. Deriha states:

I always consider what story I can tell visitors with objects. This time, I wanted to tell how the [Russian] collector Vasilyev viewed [Ainu culture] with the exhibits, but the FRPAC wanted to display "beautiful" craft works. I wanted Ainu committee members to select craft works to exhibit, but only specialists went to Saint Petersburg and they se-

lected 200 “beautiful” craft works. I want to stress that “stereotypical” anthropological taxonomy is also someone’s view. I don’t think there is so much difference between anthropological taxonomy and [Vasilyev or] Munro’s view toward the Ainu. First, [they] didn’t know much about the Ainu, but as [they] collected [artifacts], [they] became able to understand who the Ainu are and what the Ainu think. I would like the FRPAC to adopt such views in their exhibitions. (Personal communication with Deriha, 2005, author’s translation)

Although the framework of *The Exhibition of Ainu Collection of Russian Ethnography Museum* is closer to an anthropological taxonomy than Vasilyev’s view, Akino is still a little critical. He thinks while the exhibition itself was not bad, the catalogue was difficult, especially for people who live outside Hokkaido and are unfamiliar with Ainu culture. He states that the catalogue should have mentioned how these craft works were used based on anthropological research results. He appreciates that the committee added small panels which generally introduce traditional Ainu culture at the Kawasaki City Museum, the exhibition site outside Hokkaido of that year (Personal communication with Akino, 2005).

It has been a difficult issue to consider how museums should exhibit Ainu culture and convey messages to visitors. *Message from the Ainu*, 2003 was the first special exhibition on the Ainu in Shikoku. It can be said that the attempt of the museum to hold a special exhibition of the Ainu people must have been quite adventurous especially since it was unknown how visitors would accept the exhibition. Because most Japanese are unsure whether the Ainu people still exist in contemporary Japanese society, the museum may have failed to convey to visitors what the exhibition was intended to do. Kaizawa, who joined the committee, states:

Since *Message from the Ainu* was the first special exhibition on the Ainu in Shikoku, I think we should have displayed traditional Ainu craft works as well. The curators [of the museum] would have been uncertain [how they should exhibit contemporary Ainu craft works], I, too, am still unsure how visitors saw that exhibition. (Personal communication with Kaizawa, 2005, author’s translation)

More than 150 exhibitions have been held since 1990, compared to only 22 before then. The International Year of the World’s Indigenous People, 1993, encouraged the national government to support museums to hold exhibitions on the Ainu. The establishment of the FRPAC made possible annual Ainu craft exhibitions all over Japan, and curators started to organize exhibitions from different perspectives. Ainu

craftspeople also gained opportunities to join the processes of organization. Meanwhile, there has been a conflict over what concepts should be adopted and how craft works should be exhibited, especially when special exhibitions on the Ainu are held outside Hokkaido. It has not been investigated how visitors react to each exhibition.

Opportunities for the Ainu to participate in the organization process of the special exhibitions have also been increasing. Special exhibitions on the Ainu are, however, planned and organized overwhelmingly by Japanese specialists. A *Scottish Physician's View* and *Message from the Ainu* provided Ainu craftspeople opportunities to join the projects, but the main organizers are Japanese specialists and they got the Ainu craftspeople to join the projects "to reflect their views to craft works." These exhibitions were not spontaneously organized by Ainu craftspeople to promote and spread their own culture. Muraki Miyuki, the curator of the Ainu Museum, Shiraoi, is therefore critical of some exhibition concepts. She states:

Like the concept of *Message from the Ainu*, the phrase that "in this exhibition, the Ainu did this for the first time" is a kind of Japanese specialists' performance. They seem to want to show that they have reflected Ainu perspectives when they research or exhibit Ainu culture. Probably they don't want to be criticized for the lack of Ainu perspectives. I'm often invited to give a lecture etc. They seem to want me to provide an "Ainu female" perspective, rather than my own perspective. (Personal communication with Muraki, 2004, author's translation)

The reason why Ainu craftspeople, or more generally, ordinary Ainu people, do not plan such exhibitions is partly because they have not had opportunities to learn about their own culture and the ways it might be represented. She continues:

Opportunities to study Ainu culture should be given not by FRPAC exhibition project but by the establishment of a national Ainu research centre, etc. (ibid)

Meanwhile, Kaizawa is eager to hold the second exhibition on contemporary Ainu craft works.

I hope we can have *Message from the Ainu* again. It helps to inherit contemporary Ainu craft works to the future, to upraise Ainu spirituality, and encourage young craftspeople. There are a lot of merits. It will also provide a space for self-representation. I also want art museums to accept our craft works as exhibit. Of course, we should improve our craft skills. (Personal communication with Kaizawa, 2005, author's

translation)

Despite the conflict over exhibition concepts and some negative aspects, it cannot be questioned that cultural representation of the Ainu in the museum has reached a new stage. At least around the FRPAC, not nation-wide though, opportunities to discuss the way the Ainu are represented culturally are increasing. Ainu craftspeople are also eager to join and create exhibitions once they are invited.

“We Have Come Here to See ‘Authentic’ Ainu, Where are They”?: The Permanent Exhibition on the Ainu and Curators’ Struggle

There are some problems which remain unsolved. One is that permanent exhibitions on the Ainu have not effectively incorporated the results of special exhibitions. By the previous section, I have described special exhibitions. Phillips argues that “[m]useums welcome major anniversaries and events as opportunities to mount projects that would normally be beyond their scope” (Phillips, 2001: 85). Compared to relatively “static and unchanging” permanent exhibition, special exhibition often reflects such events to the exhibit and exhibition scale is far beyond normal levels of institutional and governmental funding (ibid). Special exhibitions on the Ainu have not been an exception. But it is important to take results and experience of special exhibitions into relatively “static” permanent exhibition and reflect “new” perspectives. Without these changes, static permanent exhibition will remain “permanently static.”

Another problem is that in the Japanese museum system, Ainu culture remains “traditional,” and contemporary Ainu culture has been rarely represented, in both special and permanent exhibitions. Few museums tell visitors about the Ainu in the twenty-first century. What problems are caused by the lack of contemporary element? In this section, I review permanent exhibitions on Ainu culture at the museums in Hokkaido and address these questions.

In Hokkaido, there are about fifteen facilities which specifically focus on Ainu culture. Managing organizations are various from individual persons to local government, universities, foundations, and the Hokkaido Ainu Association. The Ainu Museum, Shiraoi, the largest facility in Hokkaido, has an interesting policy. Currently they can perform sixteen dances, but only three of them are performed for visitors. Rather, they inherit such immaterial culture for the staff themselves, in other words, to help the Ainu form a distinct Ainu identity and give the confidence to live as Ainu. Although rituals held in the museum are open to visitors, these activities are held not for visitors per se but rather for the staff in

order to study Ainu culture. Meanwhile, the museum accepts anyone, regardless of ethnic background, who is interested in Ainu culture as staff. Currently the staff members consist not only of Ainu but also Japanese and Chinese (Ainu Museum, n.d.). Still the museum permanent exhibition lacks contemporary Ainu culture.

Their exhibition, like most other Ainu museums in Hokkaido, follows an orthodox anthropological taxonomy, such as lifestyle, spiritual culture, and agriculture and hunting. The exhibition includes traditional tools for hunting, fishing, weaving and cooking, small swords called *makiri*, clothing, utensils such as *inaw*, and *nima* (small wooden plates) with Ainu motifs to restore “traditional” Ainu lifestyle. Audiovisual equipment occasionally broadcasts traditional Ainu lyric *yukar*. Visitors can see some restored *ci-sets* outside the museum building. Since Shiraoi has developed as an Ainu tourist site, there is a gift shopping centre next to the museum, and commodified craftworks such as bear carvings, which are produced by contemporary craftspeople, are available. The shopping centre is strategically located in front of the museum, while the route to the museum itself runs directly through the shopping centre. As such, all visitors are required to pass through the shopping area. This situation impresses visitors with the difference between artifacts and commodified craftworks. The former should be in museums as exhibitions of “traditional authentic” culture, while the latter should be in gift shops as souvenirs which may remind them of their visit to an “exotic” place. Seeing the exhibit of these facilities critically, the exhibit fails to reflect contemporary Ainu lifestyle and constructs Ainu society as “static,” “exotic,” and “other.” Commodified artifacts never get the status of museum exhibit. Only the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum displays some contemporary craftworks by Nibutani craftspeople.

Since Hokkaido had been the land exclusively occupied by the Ainu before the Japanese contact, most historical museums in Hokkaido have an exhibit on the Ainu. The largest historical museum is the Historical Museum of Hokkaido in Sapporo. The Historical Museum of Hokkaido was established in 1971 as one of the projects to commemorate the “centennial of Hokkaido” (Historical Museum of Hokkaido, nd). In the museum, the exhibition on the Ainu is exclusively organized by the department of anthropology, and incorporated into the second section of the entire exhibition. This section is denoted as the history of Hokkaido between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are few exhibitions on Ainu culture after the nineteenth century in the museum. Exhibitions depicting life after the nineteenth century focus strictly on the history of the Japanese colonization of Hokkaido. The existence of the Ainu is, therefore, almost wiped out. In addition, there are no exhibitions

of contemporary Ainu culture, though the contemporary industrialized landscape of Hokkaido is exhibited. The Ainu culture is represented as a past culture, and located separate from the mainstream Japanese contemporary history.

Some museums such as the National Museum of Ethnology and the Osaka Human Rights Museum have developed collaborative projects with the Ainu to fabricate their exhibition. Even the results of such collaborative projects are sometimes the target of critique since they are not exhibiting contemporary Ainu culture (see the dispute over the exhibition on the Ainu at the National Museum of Ethnology, Niessen, 1994; Ohtsuka, 1997; Shimizu, 1997). The reason why the museum develops collaborative projects is because the museum intends to show visitors the inheritance of Ainu culture in the present by getting the Ainu to participate in the fabrication of exhibition. This message is hardly conveyed to visitors, however.

Even if museums display contemporary Ainu culture, some problems seem to remain unsolved. Yoshihara Hideki, the curator of the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum, does not deny that the museum should exhibit contemporary Ainu culture more, but he has a little cynical perspective.

Not all museums exhibit contemporary culture, but you can't criticize their exhibition just because they don't exhibit contemporary culture. We are now discussing possibility to exhibit contemporary culture but it's really tough because most visitors expect to see traditional Ainu culture here. The stereotype that Ainu culture should be traditional strongly exists in the contemporary Japanese society. This is a difficult issue, so not only museum but also school education and mass media should tackle with this problem. (Personal communication with Yoshihara, 2001, quoted in Nakamura, 2002, author's translation)

He thinks that they should develop their exhibition on traditional Ainu culture first. Meanwhile, he adds that "rock music composed and performed by the Japanese is recognized as Japanese culture. Similarly, I hope what the Ainu are concerned about will be recognized as Ainu culture" (ibid).

The Ainu Museum, Shiraoi, has discussed the possibility to exhibit Ainu history, including contemporary Ainu culture. They recognize that their permanent exhibit is only on the past, and sometimes organize special exhibitions on contemporary Ainu activities. They are dissatisfied with such special exhibitions because such exhibitions are not more than ones on biography, cultural promotion and festival, and the resto-

ration of Ainu language. Those special exhibitions do not represent the majority of the contemporary Ainu, who are not engaging in Ainu cultural activities. They do not have a blueprint how they can effectively represent contemporary Ainu (Personal communication with Muraki, 2005; with Nakamura Itsuki, the Director of the Ainu Museum, 2004).

Here again, the term “tradition” can be replaced with “Ainu flavour.” Anything contemporary or anything which lacks “Ainu flavour” is not considered to be part of Ainu culture. In the popular Japanese imagination, Ainu culture should exist in the past. It can be said that this stereotype is systematically constructed in contemporary Japanese society. School education and mass media, for example, rarely mention that different ethnic groups live in contemporary Japan in the same lifestyle as the Japanese. Mass media now often report events to promote Ainu traditional culture such as ceremonies or cultural schools, but they rarely report on their daily life. Such reports, in most cases, are shadowed by an ethnic umbrella. Japanese nationalism attempts to forge the Japanese into one entity; thus, it is not easy for the Japanese public to comprehend the existence of other ethnic groups in contemporary Japanese society. Most Japanese believe that the Ainu still live a traditional lifestyle—hunting, fishing and gathering—while many others believe that the Ainu have long been extinct. Some Japanese do not recognize even the existence of the Ainu. People who are not Japanese are viewed as “Others” and they are popularly identified in the Japanese imagination as having unique lifestyles. Thus, the present-day Ainu who wear Western style clothing, watch TV, and use the internet and iPod like the Japanese tend to be considered “impure” or an “inauthentic” Ainu.

The tourist industry has also constructed stereotypical images of the Ainu. Since the nineteenth century, there has been “a growing trend to view the indigenous Ainu as an integral part of the scenery of Hokkaido as ‘frontier.’... [B]esides the natural splendour of Hokkaido, ‘the Ainu—a people still following primitive customs and manners’—was another important rhetoric employed to promote ‘Ainu tourism’” (Ohtsuka, 2003: 138). In tourist sites, tourists “enjoy the staged ceremony of sending back the spirits of bears, performed by the Ainu who wear traditional costumes adorned with Ainu patterns. After watching these performances, the tourists believe that what they have just seen is how the Ainu actually live” (ibid).

In Shiraoi, where the site is tourist-oriented, cultural performance has had to attract tourists. Muraki argues that this situation is changing and now their policy addresses how they represent their own culture from their perspectives as a cultural institution, rather than as a tourist site with a mandate to attract tourists (Personal communication with

Muraki, 2005). Still they are struggling to see the merit of cultural promotion for the contemporary Ainu, the other local residents, and the town of Shiraoi.

What is contemporary Ainu culture? Artifacts? Contemporary Art works, or tourist art? I'm really interested in what concept the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum has to collect contemporary Ainu craft works. I agree culture changes. But I feel some contemporary Ainu art works tend to destroying Ainu spirituality. They should create new art works after they learn tradition, to some extent. I don't think any art works produced by the Ainu are Ainu art. What is Ainu art? Specialists have not discussed this issue very much. Frankly speaking, I do not understand well even art works by [a contemporary artists] Sunazawa Bikky. (Personal communication with Muraki, 2004, author's translation)

The curators are falling into a trap. They want to tell visitors the existence of the Ainu as a different ethnic people in contemporary Japan. But if they stress cultural distinctiveness in their museum exhibition which represents traditional culture, most visitors see the exhibition as a contemporary Ainu lifestyle. Meanwhile, if the curators tell visitors that the Ainu do not live in a traditional lifestyle any more, visitors wonder if there are still "authentic" Ainu somewhere, or they misunderstand that the Ainu has long been extinct. Due to the lack of information and the systematically constructed popular imagination, most Japanese believe that cultural distinctiveness represents different lifestyles in the same country in the present. In addition, the Ainu themselves are unsure what contemporary Ainu culture is.

Muraki once told:

You know 007 series novels. When one of the novelists, Raymond Benson visited the museum in June 2001, he asked; "I want to write about contemporary Ainu in my novel, what do you think?" I asked to him how he is representing contemporary Ainu. He stated that there is no difference in lifestyle or else between other people and the Ainu he represents. He just wanted to have some characters who are of Ainu ethnicity in his novel. I wonder why it is so difficult for many Japanese to understand that there is no difference in lifestyle between ethnic minorities and the Japanese but there are other ethnic groups in the contemporary Japanese society. (Personal communication with Muraki, 2001, quoted in Nakamura, 2002, author's translation)

Interviews to the curators clarified that they often get some ignorant

questions from visitors because of the lack of information on history and contemporary condition of the Ainu. Visitors try to find out the location of “authentic” Ainu villages, ask if the Ainu still live in a *ci-set*, and ask staff to introduce “authentic” Ainu people. When a visitor asked a staff member of the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum where the “chief” lives, this staff member answered that there is no *shucho* (chief) here, but there is a *chocho* (mayor) of the town of Biratori. This staff member wonders if the visitor really understood what was said. For the moment, for the staff and most curators, cultural activity is a struggle and a battle with stereotypes on a daily basis. Of course, the issue of stereotypes has to be discussed and solved at many different levels; however, tourism and visiting Ainu museums are sometimes the greatest opportunity to experience Ainu culture for the majority of the Japanese. Under this situation, it would be quite adventurous for Ainu museums to take “new” trials and perspectives from special exhibitions into their permanent exhibition. First of all, they have to tell visitors the existence of the Ainu and educate them.

Why Contemporary Culture? And for the Future: Conclusion

As Yoshihara states, there is a stereotype that Ainu culture should be “traditional,” and I do not argue that museum exhibitions on the Ainu always have to reflect contemporary Ainu culture. At the local level, however, the lack of contemporary elements from museum exhibits has not significantly attracted local residents, especially the younger generation, to engage in cultural activities. In Nibutani, for example, despite a long-term struggle by Kayano Shigeru, the inheritance of Ainu culture has not been successful. People who have traditional skills are becoming old, while few younger people have been interested in acquiring such skills. For the young Ainu, Ainu culture is not their concern. For them, the museum is also some kind of different world. Even some museum staff, either Ainu or Japanese, stated that they had never visited the museum before they started working at the museum. They have had an impression that the museum in general has only old historical objects. In addition, many local residents did not know until recently even what the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum was doing. In Shiraoi, too, Muraki points out that the majority of the Ainu are now not engaging in cultural activities. For them, culture is not an important thing. Such people therefore do not visit the museum. People do not see a large connection between traditional culture and themselves who live in the contemporary society. Does traditional Ainu culture have no sense for the contemporary Ainu any more?

Muraki once told:

Our policy is to help the Ainu to form Ainu identity and give a confidence to live as an Ainu through museum activities such as restoring artifacts and performing traditional Ainu culture, ritual etc. The process of studying Ainu culture and tradition really helped me to form Ainu identity and now I believe that the Ainu are also equally humans like other people. Before I became a curator here and learned Ainu culture, I hated the fact that I have Ainu ethnicity. I was not considering the Ainu and myself as a human because the Ainu have experienced severe discrimination for a long time. (Personal communication with Muraki, 2001, quoted in Nakamura, 2002, my translation)

Learning a culture is a process in which it is important to confirm identity and gain the confidence to live as a person who belongs to the culture. The opportunities and sources of this process are especially important for cultural minorities. It is therefore not meaningless for Ainu museums to include contemporary culture and attract younger Ainu to their activities. Currently, however, Japanese school education and mass media are far from contributing to Ainu cultural promotion and public education on the Ainu. Ainu museums are one of few institutions to attract people to cultural activities, while correcting stereotypes of the public and doing curatorial works and research.

Since the late 1990s, the environment surrounding museums and the Ainu has changed. Yoshihara (Yoneda) believes that historians will positively evaluate the late twentieth and early twenty-first century as the beginning of cultural renaissance for the Ainu. Cultural activities of the Ainu are moving from being viewed as negative to being accepted as positive, from restraint to manifestation, from repression to progress, from discrimination to respect, and from resignation to hope (Yoneda 1999: 377). There remain many problems unsolved, but the major change is that there is now a space to discuss the way of how museums can more effectively represent Ainu culture, including contemporary culture, especially around the FRPAC. In this sense, the contribution of the FRPAC and the Ainu Culture Promotion Act is significant. A series of interviews with curators, however, gave me the impression that curators are unfamiliar with what other museums are doing. It would be necessary to construct a museum network or to develop collaborative projects among Ainu museums so that curators can share information and knowledge, which may bring a new view on contemporary Ainu culture and an innovative change of permanent exhibitions. It seems that the curators' struggles will not be dissolved in the near future.

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